

What is claimed is:

1. A slider of a thin-film magnetic head comprising:
  - a medium facing surface that faces toward a recording medium;
  - 5 a substrate having a first surface that faces toward the recording medium and is located farther from the recording medium than the medium facing surface; and a second surface that meets the first surface;
  - 10 a thin-film magnetic head element located near the second surface of the substrate and near the medium facing surface;
  - 15 an insulating portion surrounding the thin-film magnetic head element and having a surface that constitutes a part of the medium facing surface; and
  - 20 a medium facing layer located adjacent to the first surface of the substrate and having a surface that constitutes another part of the medium facing surface, wherein:
    - the substrate has a hardness greater than that of the insulating portion, and
    - as the substrate and the medium facing layer are compared in hardness, the medium facing layer has a hardness closer to that of the insulating portion.
2. A slider of a thin-film magnetic head according to claim 1, wherein the medium facing surface has a concavity/convexity 25 for controlling flying of the slider over the recording medium.

3. A slider of a thin-film magnetic head according to claim 1, wherein the main material of the insulating portion and the material of the medium facing layer are the same.

5 4. A slider of a thin-film magnetic head according to claim 3, wherein: the substrate is made mainly of aluminum oxide and titanium carbide; the insulating portion is made mainly of alumina; and the medium facing layer is made of alumina.

10 5. A slider of a thin-film magnetic head according to claim 1, wherein: the substrate is made mainly of aluminum oxide and titanium carbide; the insulating portion is made mainly of alumina; and the medium facing layer is made of diamond-like carbon.